(b) the number of trains proposed to be introduced in future alongwith the steps taken by the Government in this regard so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) 9 Express (Single) trains including one pair of Rajdhani were introduced since June, 96 from various states to Bihar.

(b) As announced in the Budget Speech for 1997-98, 2 pairs of Express trains namely Delhi-Ranchi Bi-weekly Express and Surat Patna weekly Express will be introduced during 1997-98.

PCO Opened in Gujarat

4135. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of new public call offices opened in Gujarat and the additional staff appointed correspondingly during 1995-96;

(b) whether the public call offices are being manned by physically handicapped persons;

(c) if so, the number of such appointments made in the State during the last three years;

(d) whether the Government propose to open more public call offices in the State; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) 1033 local and 1776 STD PCOs were opened in Gujarat during 1995-96. No additional staff has been appointed for this purpose.

(b) Yes, Sir. Some of them are manned by physically handicapped persons.

(c) Physically handicapped persons manning the PCOs are not the employees of Department of Telecom. They are the licencees of the PCOs and work on commission basis.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. 3985 such PCOs have been opened during the current financial year. The details are given in the enclosed Statement.

Statement

S.No.	Name of District	PCOs Opened as on 31.1.97 (STD + Local)
1	2	3
1.	Ahmedabad (Gandhi Nagar)	1024
2.	Vadodara	1144
3.	Rajkot	389
4.	Surat	127
5.	Mehsana	119
6.	Nadiad	49
7.	Bhavnagar	145
8.	Bhuj	35
9.	Bharuch	15
10.	Bulsar Dang	388
11.	Panchmahal	111
12.	Sabarkantha	74
13.	Jam Nagar	129
14.	Junagarh	06
15.	Banaskantha	159
16.	Surendranagar	44
17.	Amreli	27
		3985

[Translation]

Setting up of New Railway Zones

4136. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of new railway zones set up by the Government during the last year alongwith the divisions included therein;

(b) whether Kota division has been transferred from North-West Railway Zone to Western Railway Zone which having its headquarter in Mumbai;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether there is persistant demand of people of Rajasthan to transfer Kota division back to North-West Railway Zone which having its headquarter in Jaipur; and

(e) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) Government has decided to set up six new zones with headquarters as follows :

New Zones	Headquarters
East-Coast Railway	Bhubaneswar
East-Central Railway	Hajipur
North-Central Railway	Allahabad
North-Western Railway	Jaipur
South-Western Railway	Bangalore
West-Central Railway	Jabalpur

The inaugural functions of all these zonal headquarter offices were held during last year.

A final view on the detailed territorial jurisdiction of new zones has not yet been taken.

(d) and (e) A representation has been received for attaching Kota Division to North-Western Zone. A final view on the detailed territorial jurisdiction of new zones has not yet been taken.

[English]

Insufficient Facilities to Passengers

4137. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that trains running in Orissa have no arrangements of potable water and electric fans and as a result thereof it cause great difficulties to passengers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) All trains passing through Orissa are having facility of electric fans. Adequate drinking water arrangements are also made at the platforms/stations for the passengers travelling in the trains over Indian Railways including in the State of Orissa. The arrangements are suitably augmented during the summer season when the demand for drinking water substantially goes up.

Funds for Expansion of Telephone

4138. SHRI C. NARAYANA SWAMY :Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to have separate budget/targets for Telephone expansion in rural areas and delink it with combined allocation of funds/targets for a particular Telecom district/zone/State;

(b) if so, by when;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government are aware that budgetory allocation and target for a particular area are used by and large in urban/semi urban areas and rural areas are neglected; and

(e) the percentage of the target achieved in rural areas during each of the last three financial years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Funds are already being separately allocated for rural areas in the plan proposals. However, targets are set for urban and rural areas combined except for village public telephones (VPYs) for which targets are separately earmarked.

(b) In view of (a) the question does not arise.

(c) In view of (a) the question does not arise.

(d) Some allocation for rural area has been utilised in general area which includes urban area.

(e) The achievements of VPT are as follows :

Year	Achievement
1993-94	70%
1994-95	95%
1995-96	30%

Procurement of Biscuits for Sale

4139. SHRI I.D. SWAMI :
SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Northern Railway (DRM Delhi) invited tenders for procurement of biscuits for sale by its catering departments only from the five biscuit companies and not from the whole biscuit industry;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of the above five biscuit companies; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to stop such irregularities and bring to book the officials involved in such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir. Procurement of supplies of proprietory items is done by the Railways from the manufacturers of the reputed brands.

(b) Keeping in view the quality, reputation and popularity of brands the railway administration short listed following Companies for procurement of supplies :

M/s Britania Industries Ltd.

M/s Parle Biscuits Ltd.

M/s Cremica Agro Foods Ltd.

M/s Smith-Kline Beecham Consumers Health Care Products.

M/s Bakeman's Industries Pvt. Ltd.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

STD/PCO Allotted in Sonipat

4140. DR. ARVIND SHARMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the District Telecommunication Engineer, District Sonipat-Haryana has allotted STD/PCO arbitrarily without constituting a committee despite directives issued in this regard by his Ministry;